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Canada's New Government announces agreement with Australia to benefit construction sector

OTTAWA, ONTARIO, January 25, 2007 —The Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, and His Excellency William Fisher, Australian High Commissioner, today announced a partnership agreement between the Construction Sector Council of Canada (CSC) and the Australian Construction Industry Forum that will help to address labour market issues in the construction industry.

"This industry partnership is the first of its kind and Canada's New Government is pleased to provide support through funding to the Sector Council Program," said Minister Solberg. "The construction sector is an important contributor to the economy in both Canada and Australia and this agreement provides an excellent opportunity to tackle human resources challenges and get skilled tradespeople into both the Canadian and Australian work force, when and where they are needed."

The aim of the partnership agreement is to support and enhance each organization's ability to forecast construction investment activity, employment demand and supply in the residential and non-residential sectors. The agreement will enable the construction industry in both countries to share approaches and best practices in predicting labour needs and addressing skilled trade shortages

"This historic industry-led agreement is an example of the key role that innovative approaches can play in international labour market issues," said High Commissioner Fisher. "By sharing information, expertise and research, both economies will benefit."

The CSC's approach on predicting construction labour market needs and addressing skilled trades shortages, through its labour market forecasting model, will be shared with Australia. The two organizations will also explore opportunities to work collaboratively on areas of common interest.

"We are pleased to have the Government of Canada's support in developing and promoting our top-notch forecasting system," says Timothy Flood, Construction Sector Council Business Co-chair and President of John Flood and Sons Limited." The CSC's *Construction Looking Forward* forecasting reports are certainly a hit here, and we are proud of the international recognition they have gained."

"The ability to predict when and where 32 trades and occupations will be available over the next nine years provides a world-class model," said Neil Marshall, Chairman of the Australian Construction Industry Forum. "We are also impressed by the CSC's consultation process with industry leaders from each sector and region of the country, and with the research on labour market issues, such as the future of mobile workers."

The CSC was established in 2001 to address the work force needs of the construction industry by bringing together stakeholders to provide data that industry can use to make critical decisions. Funding for the CSC is being provided by the Government of Canada's Sector Council Program.

Sector councils are designed to meet emerging skills requirements, address skills and labour

shortages, and build essential skills in the workplace as a foundation for continuous learning. They are organizations that bring together governments, business, and labour and educational stakeholders in key sectors to share ideas, concerns, and perspectives about human resources and skills issues. Their goal is to find solutions that benefit the sector in a collective, collaborative, and sustained manner.

Sector councils play a vital role in helping to strengthen the Canadian labour market, thereby contributing to the productivity and competitiveness of the Canadian economy and the standard of living of all Canadians.

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